

Rate Assistance Program

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Supersedes				
Key Contacts		Phone	Short Title	
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Council Action Required?	Yes	If YES, within the next 3 months?		Yes
Presenters (if applicable)	Kelly Enright Matthew McCudden			

Summary Statement

This legislation changes the eligibility verification process to allow certain approved affordable housing groups to verify customers' eligibility on the Utility's behalf. Simplifying the application process will help enroll customers who were previously unaware of this benefit.

Background

City Light's 2012 Strategic Plan calls for increasing utilization of low income rate assistance programs. A new working group has been established within the Customer Care area whose sole focus will be on helping low income customers reduce their electric bills. This group provides customers a comprehensive approach to affording their electric bills through a combination of financial assistance and energy efficiency improvements. This group has also increased outreach and proactive contact to customers who may be eligible for rate assistance and energy efficiency measures.

These changes to the rate ordinance will allow SCL employees to assist customers with the rate assistance application process making the programs more accessible to these customers.

Key Issues

SCL has a significant number of customers who face barriers getting access to these programs. The process for applying for any kind of rate assistance can be lengthy and often burdensome. Customers where English is not the primary language often struggle with finding the right resources. As rates increase, larger bills become an even bigger hardship for already struggling customers. SCL has implemented a new approach to helping low income customers connect with our utility discount program. This program proactively identifies customers and assists them with the application process for programs available to help customers from conservation to rate assistance that they may not be aware that they qualify for.